



The American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association

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About AREMA

The American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association (AREMA) was formed on October 1, 1997, as the result of a merger of three engineering support associations, namely the American Railway Bridge and Building Association, the American Railway Engineering Association and the Roadmasters and Maintenance of Way Association, along with functions of the Communications and Signal Division of the Association of American Railroads.

The rich history of the predecessor organizations, each having over 100 years of service to the rail industry, is the legacy of AREMA.

Roadmasters and Maintenance of Way Association

The oldest of the predecessor groups is the Roadmasters and Maintenance of Way Association. It was organized in 1883 by 61 roadmasters representing 24 railroads, who recognized the need for an organization through which maintenance officers would have an opportunity to meet and discuss their mutual problems. The organization of Roadmasters Association was a pioneer effort and the men who organized it and fashioned its policies and methods of procedure, with few exceptions, had no experience with association work. At the beginning of the Association, it was dedicated to work through committees and publish the results in the Proceedings, a practice that was continued through its 114-year history. Rail joints, switches, frogs and ties were among the subjects studied from the Association's inception and the standardization of maintenance practices had a large part of every program in the early years. The Roadmasters association has a history of constructive effort and important accomplishment, a heritage that cannot be ignored.

American Railway Engineering Association

At the suggestion of Railway Age magazine, a meeting was held in Chicago on October 21, 1898, to organize a forum for the development and study of recommended practices for the newly-integrated standard-gauge North American railway network. This led to a meeting in 1899 in Buffalo, New York, to adopt a constitution and establish a permanent organization named

American Railway Bridge and Building Association

American Railway Bridge and Building Association was formed in 1891 in St. Louis as the American International Association of Railway Superintendents of Bridges and Buildings. It was decided by 36 men who attended the first gathering to hold an annual meeting for the dissemination of ideas through the reports of committees on selected subjects of mutual interest to the members from the various railroads. The original 36 attendees plus 24 others became the charter members. They represented 40 railroads. The Association's name was changed in 1907 to the American Railway Bridge and Building Association. Many dynamic changes occurred during the B&B's 106-year history, but the basic reasons for its formation – the need to exchange information and to find solutions to problems that confront the railway industry – never changed. In keeping with the original intent of Association, the B&B presented its first seminar in 1991, the year of its 100th anniversary. Several of these seminars continue under the AREMA banner.

Communications and Signal Divisions

A precursor of the Communications and Signal Division of the Association of American Railroads was the Association of Telegraph and Telephone Superintendents, which was formed in 1885 by the telegraph superintendents of the major railroads. Ten years later the Railway Signaling Club was organized at a meeting in Chicago. The club created a code of rules governing the operation of interlocking plants and

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the American Railway Engineering and Maintenance of Way Association, which was later shortened to the American Railway Engineering Association. From its inception, AREA dealt with the many engineering challenges through standing technical committees. Five of those committees – ties, rail, track, buildings and yards and terminals continued intact continuously from 1899 until the merger and still continue under AREMA functional groups. In 1905, AREA issued its first Manual of Recommended Practices. Its name was changed to the Manual of Railway Engineering in 1970 and is updated annually by the technical committees. The manual, which is now also available on CD-ROM, will continue under AREMA.

continued to meet and present papers on pertinent topics. In 1919 the Signaling Club became the Signal Division of the newly created American Railway Association and the Telegraph Superintendents became the Telegraph and Telephone Section. The ARA became the Association of American railroads (AAR) in 1934 and the Signal Division was renamed the Signal Section and the Telegraph and Telephone was renamed the Communications Section. The two sections merged in 1961 to become the Communications and Signal Division of the AAR. All C&S technical work will come under AREMA, including committees, manuals and meetings.

AREMA

Each of the four groups that came together to form AREMA have, in the own way, built an excellent foundation upon which to base the new Association, whose mission is the development and advancement of both technical and practical knowledge and recommended practices pertaining to the design, construction and maintenance of railway infrastructure.
